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House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. PRICE of Georgia).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC.

June 19, 2006.

I hereby appoint the Honorable TOM PRICE to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 31, 2006, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 30 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER) for 5 minutes.

THE IRAQ RESOLUTION

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, last Thursday and Friday, the House conducted a very important debate on the global war on terror. The resolution in question, H. Res. 861, honored the sacrifice of our soldiers and reaffirmed our commitment to victory in that global war on terror. I am very heartened that the House Republicans were joined by nearly a quarter of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle, 42, to be exact, voting in support of this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, it was a spirited 10-hour debate, and over the course of it I

heard some criticisms that I believe deserve a response. Many in the minority objected to the resolution and the forum for its consideration. They contended that the resolution was hollow, and it did not allow for a meaningful debate on the war.

With such antipathy for the process and the resolution, one would have expected the Democratic leadership to ask for a vote on the previous question on the rule so that they could, in fact, amend it. In fact, they didn't. Or they might have offered a specific official substitute resolution which I, on several occasions over a 2-day period, said we would have considered making in order.

But, Mr. Speaker, they did neither. In fact, as I said, for over 2 days, I asked the Democratic leadership for an alternative. I was told that nothing would be forthcoming. While individual Members such as Mr. ABERCROMBIE did offer their own alternatives, the minority on the Rules Committee chose not to submit any of them as the official Democratic substitute.

Unfortunately, many Members chose to make this a debate about process, rather than the real issue at hand. After listening to the debate, I know why. The minority party has no clear position on how to win the global war on terror and prevail in Iraq. When it comes to the biggest challenge of our generation, they are not of one mind. Some agree with House Republicans that it is absolutely essential to stay in Iraq until we achieve victory. Unfortunately, the majority of Democrats favor retreat in one form or another, whether it is the vague policy of redeployment or outright and immediate withdrawal, as the Out of Iraq Caucus has called it.

This is a dangerous approach, Mr. Speaker. While perhaps intended to comfort our country in the midst of a truly devastating and trying struggle, it would serve chiefly to comfort the

enemy. We know that two decades of tepid responses to attacks on our citizens and our interests in Lebanon, Somalia, New York City, Saudi Arabia, Tanzania, Kenya and Yemen only emboldened terrorists. We will not make the same mistake again.

Mr. Speaker, the Iraqi people, its security forces and its government are not naive. Nor are we. Despite recent progress such as the killing of al Zarqawi and the completion of the Iraqi government's cabinet, calm is not just around the corner. The terrorists are unyielding. After all, their stated aim is to drive coalition forces out of the country and establish a territory-hungry, terrorist-friendly extremist state.

They have openly declared that the United States does not have the will to see the fight through. They understand the significance of this battle, and so must we. We must accept nothing but total engagement and commitment as we help Iraq stabilize herself and become an ally in the war on terror. We cannot fulfill our mission, honor the sacrifice of our troops and move forward in the war on terror by backing away from its central battlefield. In a region where democracy has the potential to become more than a hope, we cannot abandon its best hope.

Mr. Speaker, if we leave prematurely, and Iraq is allowed to become a lawless territory, sympathetic to terrorists, and brutal to its own people, the safety of the world and the security of the United States of America would be directly threatened.

On September 11, 2001, we saw exactly what could happen when such conditions were allowed to exist in Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, I mentioned that some criticized the forum for our debate. As one Member described it, the 10 hours would be like a glorified special order.

But make no mistake, Mr. Speaker, our words matter. For proof, look no

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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